

# **New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report**

**Seacoast Learning Collaborative  
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**Visit Conducted on:  
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# **New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report**

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Note: *It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The facility is not mandated to implement them.*

# **New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report**

## **Seacoast Learning Collaborative**

### **I. INTRODUCTION:**

A New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval visit was conducted at the Seacoast Learning Collaborative. The visiting team met on February 10-11, 2000 in order to review the status of special education services being provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of all the teaching certifications of special education staff and random inspection of student records. Interviews were held with the Education Director, regular and special education teachers, related service personnel and administrators as time and availability permitted. In addition, the team conducted parent interviews via telephone. Throughout the visit, the team had full cooperation from all personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report you are about to read represents the consensus of all the members of the visiting team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the NH State Standards have been addressed. If a component is not mentioned, that does not mean that the team did not review it; it just means that there were no citations of noncompliance to the Standards found in that particular area.

### **II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE: Conducted on April 7-8, 1997**

After visits to each of the Seacoast Learning Collaborative programs, review of policies and procedures and interviews with staff and administrators, the visiting team determined that the facility has pursued ongoing program improvements in many areas. While many citations outlined in the previous program approval report have been addressed, some citations remain that warrant continued attention.

Of note, Seacoast Learning Collaborative has improved their overall record keeping within student files. For the most part, the visiting team found student records to contain most of the required documents and to be well organized. It was evident to the visiting team that the Seacoast Learning Collaborative is working hard to shift paper work responsibilities to the sending LEA's and continues to work cooperatively with them to ensure that student records are accurate and up to date. Despite these efforts, a few oversights were identified; therefore, the visiting team determined this to be an area that warrants on-going attention.

Curriculum writing for the Seacoast Academy has been under development and is appropriate for the population it serves. Despite this written material, Seacoast Learning Collaborative stills needs to document how all aspects of the New Hampshire Minimum State Standards are being met. The visiting team further noted that continued efforts are needed toward curriculum development for the newly created elementary and middle school EH programs, and the program servicing the autistic population. In summary, all Seacoast Learning Collaborative Programs have a continued need for curriculum development and to specify how NH Minimum State Standards will be met. Seacoast Learning

## **II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE, Continued**

Collaborative also needs to fully define their provisions for ensuring students have learning opportunities in the least restrictive environment.

The last citation continuing to warrant attention is that of staff credentials. While significant gains have been made in recruiting qualified staff, the Seacoast Learning Collaborative continues to fall short in this area. As outlined in the report that follows, staffing patterns still do not meet the requirements of the NH Department of Education. At the time of the visit, no contracts were in place for consultation/supervision in the areas of art, music, physical education or library media services etc., and all of the programs lack an EH endorsed special educator.

Overall, the Seacoast Learning Collaborative continues to demonstrate program improvements and has rectified many of the citations noted in the previous program approval report. It was the consensus of the visiting team that much hard work has been put forth by the Seacoast Learning Collaborative to ensure the quality programming found in each program. As in the past, it is strongly suggested that the Seacoast Learning Collaborative look toward more collaboration and making connections with member school districts to address unresolved citations. Serious consideration needs to be given to improve collaboration, sharing of expertise, resources, materials and equipment to meet the needs of the students enrolled.

## **III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

Within each of the programs at the Seacoast Learning Collaborative, there is an enthusiastic atmosphere for meeting the individual needs of all of the students enrolled. This enthusiasm is fostered throughout all of the programs by faculty, administration, support service personnel, counselors and parents. Professional development for staff is on going through many different initiatives and all personnel have committed themselves to providing quality programming to the students at the Seacoast Learning Collaborative. All of the staff at the Seacoast Learning Collaborative was consistently described as skilled, dedicated and outstanding guides for a very challenging and complex student population.

Although there are many praiseworthy things happening within the programs at the Seacoast Learning Collaborative, there were however, some areas of concern raised by the visiting team. The first concern that surfaced was in the area of staff credentials and ensuring that all personnel have appropriate NH certification for the positions they hold. As in the past, continued efforts need to be directed toward hiring a special educator with an EH endorsement, and contracts need to be obtained with consultants to ensure that the programs are meeting the requirements as outlined in the NH Minimum State Standards. (i.e. art, music, physical education, library media services etc.). In addition, all staff who are providing services to students need to hold certification or licensure in the state of New Hampshire, this includes teachers and related services personnel.

The second issue that surfaced is closely related to the above-mentioned information. Overall, the visiting team agreed that there remains a need to strengthen and enhance the curriculum and instruction offered to students enrolled in the Seacoast Learning Collaborative Programs. At this time there is insufficient evidence that the students in the Seacoast Learning Collaborative Programs have equal educational opportunities within their programs including full access to the curriculum as defined by the

## **III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE, Continued**

NH Minimum State Standards. Further, for those courses not available at the Seacoast Learning Collaborative, the curriculum needs to specify how minimum state standards will be met. It was also noted that there was no written curriculum available for the elementary or middle school EH Programs as well as the Autism Program; this is an issue that warrants immediate attention.

Another concern raised by the visiting team, and discussed in the depth, was the topic of least restrictive environment and the minimal opportunities for students enrolled at the Seacoast Learning Collaborative Programs to interact with typical peers. The visiting team strongly suggests that the Seacoast Learning Collaborative continue to explore possible options for program development that is linked with member school districts and discuss how resources might be shared in order to address this issue.

Overall, it was the consensus of the visiting team that the Seacoast Learning Collaborative continues to demonstrate improvements in all aspects of their programming. The attitude of all staff and administration was enthusiastic and committed toward providing the best possible education for students regardless of their ability levels. Each of the programs at the Seacoast Learning Collaborative has achieved a considerable level of success in meeting the needs of the students enrolled. The visiting team would like to recognize and reinforce the philosophy, vision and goals that the Seacoast Learning Collaborative is working toward and commend them for their hard work.

#### IV. COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS: FACILITY-WIDE

Name of Program(s) Visited: All

##### COMMENDATIONS:

- The use of the "Language Literacy Intervention Program" is quite effective and successful with students in the EH programs.
- The therapeutic model utilized with students at the Seacoast Learning Collaborative appears to be working well.
- In each program at Seacoast Learning Collaborative, there is a spirit of enthusiasm, collaboration and an open line of communication among all staff.
- Seacoast Learning Collaborative is commended for the extensive effort put forth to encourage and support professional development opportunities for all staff.
- The staff and administration at Seacoast Learning Collaborative were repeatedly described as skilled, highly motivated and dedicated to the teaching/learning process.
- The facilities at Seacoast Learning Collaborative are well maintained, clean and provide a safe learning environment for students.
- There is a genuine on-going attempt at Seacoast Learning Collaborative to resolve issues of non-compliance noted from past NH Department of Education approval visits.
- The staff and administration appear to have a good working relationship with LEAs.
- In each of the Seacoast Learning Collaborative programs, there is a very professional and child-centered atmosphere.
- The Executive Director is commended for this leadership, vision and support of staff and students.

##### CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1133.08

##### Qualification of Service Providers

Ed. 1133.05(k)

All instructional staff and related service personnel must hold appropriate certification. At the time of the program approval visit to Seacoast Learning Collaborative, there was no EH endorsed staff. The program staff does not include a speech/language pathologist; the autistic program teacher holds no NH certification (NH Dept. of Education permission to employ was evidenced) and the elementary EH teacher is waiting certification from the NH Dept. of Education. In addition, one counselor providing services to the program holds no NH license or certification (national certification was evident, but NH certification must be pursued). Seacoast Learning Collaborative must also secure contracted services to ensure that requirements of the Minimum State Standards are met (i.e. art, music, P.E., vocational education, library/media services, etc.).

Ed. 1119.03

##### Curriculum

Ed. 1133.05(h) Program Requirements

There is no written curriculum for the elementary and intermediate EH programs and the autistic programs at Seacoast Learning Collaborative. In addition, students enrolled in Seacoast Learning Collaborative programs do not have access to equal educational

opportunities as outlined in the NH Minimum State Standards (i.e. art, music, P.E., vocational education, library/media services, etc.).

Ed. 1133.16

Health Care/Emergency Procedures

For the programs located at the "castles", there does not appear to be clear written policy/procedures in the case of medical emergency, injury to staff or students.

Ed. 1133.05(j)

Least Restrictive Environment

The Seacoast Learning Collaborative programs located at the "castles" have minimal opportunities for student to participate in learning opportunities in the community or with typical peers.

Ed. 1133.08(e)

Qualifications & Requirements of Instructional Staff

The Seacoast Learning Collaborative staff employed at the "castles" programs are not aware of their job descriptions.

Ed. 113305(k)

Program Requirements

There is currently no speech/language pathologist available at Seacoast Learning Collaborative to implement IEP goals and objectives.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Seacoast Learning Collaborative needs to work at making stronger connections with local school districts in order to share resources and provide learning opportunities in the least restrictive environment for all students.
- Serious consideration needs to be given to additional supervision for Seacoast Learning Collaborative programs located at the "castles". Staff do not appear to have a clear understanding of policies, procedures or their job descriptions. An administrator is not on site at all times.
- The visiting team recommends and encourages the Seacoast Learning Collaborative to showcase student work and provide opportunities for students to display their accomplishments. Many of the classrooms, especially at the Seacoast Academy, appeared bare and were described as "clinical". Staff may want to explore strategies and opportunities for students to demonstrate their active involvement in the learning process.

## Autistic Program Located at the "Castles"

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- The staff are dedicated, patient and committed to the program.
- The staff is commended for their use of a number of best practice approaches, such as sensory integration and picture schedules.
- The facility is bright, cheerful and child-centered.

### **CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

<u>Ed 1133.08</u> <u>Ed. 1133.05(k)</u>	The teacher for this program does not presently hold NH special education certification.
<u>Ed. 1133.04(d)</u>	Student records are kept in a non-fireproof cabinet in the hallway.
<u>Ed. 1133.05(j)</u>	Students in this program do not have access to community resources or learning experiences in the least restrictive environment.
<u>Ed. 1109.04(a)</u>	1 file: lacked evidence of notice of IEP meeting.
<u>Ed. 1111.01</u>	1 file: lacked evidence of opportunity to participate in physical education.
<u>Ed. 1133.06(b)</u>	1 file: lacked mid-year evaluations of progress relative to the IEP.
<u>Ed. 1123.04</u>	There was no public listing of names of individuals with access to student records.
<u>Ed. 1133.05(h)</u> <u>Ed. 1119.03(a)</u>	Students enrolled in this program do not have access to educational opportunities as outlined in the NH Minimum State Standards.
<u>Ed. 1133.08(c)</u>	Staff could not articulate formal supervision/evaluation procedures.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

- Ensure that all services received by student should be outlined in the IEP. One student was observed in O.T., yet the IEP did not call for such services.
- The program needs to make a stronger effort to ensure students have more interactions with typical peers.

## Elementary EH Program Located at the "Castles"

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- The staff is flexible, creative and respectful of the therapeutic process.
- The combination of academics and therapy allows students to make progress in all areas.
- The facility is bright and cheery and appears to meet student's needs.

### **CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

<u>Ed. 1133.08</u> <u>Ed. 1133.05(k)</u>	The EH classroom teacher does not presently hold NH special education certification.
<u>Ed. 1133.04(d)</u>	Student records are kept in a non-fireproof cabinet in the hallway.
<u>Ed. 1123.04</u>	2 files: lacked record of disclosure.
<u>Ed. 1119.07(a)</u> <u>Ed. 1133.05(e)</u>	The speech/language goals listed in the IEP are not being implemented as there is currently no speech/language therapist available to the program.
<u>Ed. 1109.11</u> <u>Ed. 1133.06(d)</u>	Progress reports were quite comprehensive, yet not linked or reflective of IEP goals and objectives.
<u>Ed. 1123.05</u>	1 file: lacked evidence that parental rights had been issued to parents.
<u>Ed. 1119.03(a)</u> <u>Ed. 1133.05(j)</u>	Students in this program have no access to community resources or experiences in the least restrictive environment.
<u>Ed. 1109.01(b)</u>	1 file: IEP did not reflect measurable annual goals with benchmarks.
<u>Ed. 1133.05(h)</u>	Students in this program do not have access to all educational opportunities as outlined in the NH Minimum State Standards. (i.e. art, music, P.E., vocational education, library/media services, etc.).
<u>Ed. 1133.08(c)</u>	Staff are not aware of formal evaluation/supervision procedures.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

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<b>Intermediate EH Program Located at the "Castles"</b>
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**COMMENDATIONS:**

- Staff work well as a team with an open line of communication.
- The therapeutic model seems to benefit the students and is working well.
- Staff are dedicated, patient, energetic with a positive outlook for students and their successes.
- The facility is bright, cheery, roomy and versatile.
- The student to staff ratio is very appropriate.
- Student files are well organized.

**CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

<u>Ed. 1133.08</u> <u>Ed. 1133.05(k)</u>	None of the staff in this program presently hold endorsement in EH.
<u>Ed. 1133.04(d)</u>	Student records are kept in a non-fireproof cabinet in the hallway.
<u>Ed. 1133.16(a)</u>	Staff are not aware of procedures (other than calling 911) to follow in case of medical illness, injury or emergency.
<u>Ed. 1123.04</u>	No public listing of names of individuals with access to student records.
<u>Ed. 1119.07(a)</u> <u>Ed. 1133.05(e)</u>	The speech/language goals listed in the IEP are not being implemented as there is currently no speech/language therapist available to the program.
<u>Ed. 1119.03(a)</u> <u>Ed. 1133.05(j)</u>	Students in this program have no access to community resources or experiences in the least restrictive environment.
<u>Ed. 1133.07(d)</u>	Staff are not aware of written procedures for reporting suspected child abuse.
<u>Ed. 1109.03</u>	1 file: unable to determine if team composition was appropriate, as individuals did not indicate their role/position.
<u>Ed. 1133.06(d)</u>	1 file: progress report did not include attendance information.
<u>Ed. 1123.04(a)</u>	The program does not have a public listing of individuals who have access to student records.
<u>Ed. 1133.11</u> <u>Ed. 1119.05</u>	The program exceeds age range as outlined in the NH State Standards for the Education of Students with Disabilities.
<u>Ed. 1133.08(c)</u>	Staff are not aware of formal evaluation/supervision procedures.

**SUGGESTIONS:** None

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- All staff interviewed felt that the collaboration was plentiful and that they worked well as a team.
- Student files were well organized.
- Paraprofessionals appear well trained and supervised regularly. The teacher aides seem pleased with the training/support available and feel very much a part of the program.
- Weekly individualized student goal meetings and the "levels" program are well developed.
- Classrooms observed were impressive with students actively involved.
- The woodworking and weight lifting area was well utilized with ample space.
- Training and professional development are encouraged and supported.
- The building is clean, pleasant and clear of hazards.

**CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

Ed. 1107.06                      1 file: lacked written 3-year summary evaluation report.

Ed. 1109.04                      1 file: lacked evidence notice of IEP meeting and that procedural safeguards were issued to parent.

Ed. 1109.01(l)                      1 file: lacked evidence of transition plan as part of the IEP.

Ed. 1113.01                      1 file: lacked evidence of vocational evaluation.

Ed. 1119.03(a)                      Students enrolled in the Seacoast Academy do not have full access to secondary curriculum in the Minimum State Standards.

Ed. 1133.16(a)                      Staff are not aware of procedures (other than calling 911) to follow in case of medical illness, injury or emergency.

300.347(a)                      2 files: lacked NHEIAP consideration of special factors.

300.347(c)                      1 file: lacked evidence of transfer of rights statement.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- The building is impressive, however there is no space allocated for drama, PE, art music or large group functions.
- Further collaboration is needed with "member" school districts in terms of sharing facilities and resources.
- Investigate the option of a summer program to assist in the progression or retention of academics.
- Investigate family support groups/system to assist in the home-school connection.
- Attach letter to IEP progress report so that it is noted that it was sent home.
- All classrooms share a need for display of student work, projects and other evidence that alternative instruction is taking place.



# **ADDENDUM**

## **JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM**

**Seacoast Learning Collaborative**

**Student File Review**

**Case Study Document**

**Reimbursement Claim Form**

**Case Study Addendum Form**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADDENDUM</b> <b>JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM</b></p>
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**Seacoast Learning Collaborative**

**NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED:**       None

The facility reports there are no James O' students placed at the Seacoast Learning Collaborative at this time.